

Tulane, LSU Health select New Orleans BioInnovation Center as statewide partner for biomedical technology accelerator program

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Photo courtesy of the New Orleans BioInnovation Center.

Tulane University and LSU Health New Orleans have selected the [New Orleans BioInnovation Center](#) (NOBIC) as the statewide implementation partner for a newly launched initiative to augment business development efforts and accelerate the commercialization of life science research from university labs to biotechnology startups in the region and to existing companies around the world.

NOBIC will work closely with the two universities to deliver programing, business development tools and educational resources for the [Southeast Xlerator Network](#), a newly created life sciences accelerator hub backed by a consortium of 24 academic institutions, including LSU Health and Tulane.

The National Institutes of Health, which is the gold standard in federal research funding, awarded more than \$149 million in grants last fiscal year to life sciences investigators at LSU Health and Tulane University School of Medicine, Tulane School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine and Tulane National Primate Research Center.

“Given the substantial amount of basic science and translational research emerging from local university labs, we see enormous potential for growth as we work to build stronger relationships within our community,” said Kris Khalil, NOBIC interim president. “We are extremely excited that Tulane and LSU Health — the region’s two biggest drivers of life sciences innovation — are working more closely together to amplify their impact and expand the entrepreneurial ecosystem for biotechnology ventures throughout the state.”

Through NOBIC, the Southeast Xlerator Network will provide expertise in technology transfer, engage leading industry partners and promote an entrepreneurial culture throughout the region. It will also provide tools to help researchers compete for more Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grants to advance research discoveries and launch new ventures.

The network will compliment ongoing efforts by Tulane and LSU Health to more heavily engage private industry for research partnerships and other collaborations. Both universities came together last fall to showcase their life sciences researchers to outside investors, foundations and potential industry collaborators at a new event called Bio on the Bayou. That event, which is scheduled for Dec. 10, 2019, will move to NOBIC this year as part of the new partnership, said James Zanewicz, chief business officer for Tulane University School of Medicine and Louisiana state lead for the Southeast Xlerator Network.

“I am excited to be working so closely with my colleagues at NOBIC and LSU Health as we develop a strategy to help not only Louisiana – but the entire Southeast region,” Zanewicz said. “And as we have seen in his long-term success managing the New Orleans BioFund, Kris Khalil brings the perfect blend of collaboration, innovation, energy and investment savvy to the Southeast Xlerator Network team.”

Nicole Honoree, LSU Health's assistant vice chancellor for economic development and strategic initiatives, and Patrick Reed, director of technology management at LSU Health and site lead on the network, concurred, jointly noting that "this grant further solidifies the evolving alignment among our key local and regional partners in support of life sciences innovation."

The network will also engage Xavier University's College of Pharmacy as well as academic health centers and economic development partners throughout the state.

The Southeast Xlerator Network was announced in October as one of four regional hubs being created through the Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Program developed for states that have historically had low National Institutes of Health research funding and disproportionately few SBIR and STTR awards.